

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Manti-La Sal
National Forest

Original: Mine File
cc: Lowell, Price, Reader File
Price Ranger District
599 West Price River Dr.
Price, Utah 84501
ACT/007/005
Folder #2

0067

Reply to: 1950/2820

Date: July 1, 1992

Daron Haddock
Utah Division of Oil, Gas & Mining
3 Triad Center, Suite 350
355 West North Temple
Salt Lake City, Ut 84180-1203

RECEIVED

JUL 06 1992

DIVISION OF
OIL GAS & MINING

Dear Mr. Haddock:

In a letter dated June 15, 1992, Utah Fuel Company, operator of the Skyline Mine, reaffirmed the need to longwall mine the coal beneath Burnout Creek. They requested Forest Service approval to continue to subsidize Burnout Creek in accordance with Special Stipulation No. 12 of Federal Coal Lease U-044076. They provided the following information:

- * No mining by longwall methods under Burnout Creek would result in sterilization of up to two million tons of recoverable coal reserves.
- * Replacement reserves are not readily available without additional major investments which were not previously anticipated.
- * Utah Fuel has begun mining a logical sequence of panels which would be adversely affected by about one year if Burnout buffer coal is rendered unmineable,
- * Should longwall mining be disallowed under Burnout Creek, Skyline Mine's operation would be seriously disrupted.

Utah Fuel Company in the June 15, 1992 letter proposed a study, mitigation, and enhancement plan as part of it's proposed action. It included the following:

- * Enhancement (Mitigation) - The value of the fishery habitat in Burnout Creek will be quantified. That another undeveloped or underdeveloped, fishery habitat, within the upper Huntington Creek drainage, of potentially equal value will be identified and improved. That this enhancement effort will be done in advance to ensure no loss of overall habitat. Personnel from Bio/West, Inc. under the direction of Dr. Richard Valdez has been engaged by Skyline Mine to develop this proposal.
- * Study - An intensive stream monitoring program will be conducted during the subsidence activity along Burnout Creek. This program will include thorough documentation of the areas subsided and the amount of subsidence which occurred. The effect of this subsidence on flow and stream morphology and spawning habitat will be carefully monitored. Utah Fuel is working closely with the Forest Service Intermountain Research Station to develop, fund, and implement this study.
- * Mitigation (Contingency Plan) - A commitment to mitigate or repair any damage which does occur from subsidence immediately, and in a mutually

approved manner. These mitigation measures will include means to control sediment and re-establish stream flow that may be affected.

The initial Mining and Reclamation Plan (MRP) for the Skyline Mine was approved in 1979. This approval was based on an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared by the Department of Interior in 1979 and an Environmental Assessment (EA) completed by the Forest Service in 1980 for the mine. Since that time Utah Fuel has planned to mine under Burnout Canyon.

The Land and Resource Management Plan for the Manti-La Sal National Forest (Forest Plan) was completed in 1986. The Forest Plan requires specific measures for the protection of perennial drainages. Special Stipulation No. 9 from Appendix B, page B-3 of the Forest Plan was included in Federal Coal Lease U-044076 as Stipulation No. 12. This stipulation requires specific approval prior to undertaking mining operations that could result in subsidence of perennial streams.

An EIS prepared in 1990 for the rerouting of Questar Pipeline identified parts of the Burnout drainage as perennial. It determined that Upper Huntington Creek, including Burnout Creek, has been designated a disease-free source of eggs for raising Yellowstone (Strawberry) Cutthroat Trout for statewide stocking purposes. Over the last several years and for the next 20 years this area will be a primary source of eggs for the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources.

In a letter dated April 30, 1992, the Bureau of Land Management provided comments concerning the approved Resource Recovery and Protection Plan (R2P2) for the Skyline Mine and the protection of the Burnout Creek drainage area. They anticipate that mining operations should not have any long-term effects on the flow of the perennial stream and that mining operations should continue.

As the surface management agency of the area covered by the proposal, a decision by the Supervisor of the Manti-La Sal National Forest is required. This decision to approve or not approve the proposed action, will be based on an Environmental Analysis (EA). This scoping letter begins the EA process.

The project area is located approximately 45 miles northwest of Price, Utah. The area is located in portions of Sections 34 and 26, T.13S., R.6E., Salt Lake Meridian, Emery County, Utah. See the enclosed General Location Map No. 1.

The proposed action for this analysis is to mine two coal seams using longwall panels which underlie portions of the Burnout Creek drainage. The mining would be full extraction thereby subsiding Burnout Creek. See the enclosed Vicinity Map No.2. Management emphasis in the project area is for production of forage and cover for domestic livestock and wildlife (RNG) as defined in the Forest Plan. General direction for the minerals activities in RNG emphasis areas is:

- * Provide appropriate mitigation measures to assure continued livestock access and use.
- * Those authorized to conduct developments will be required to replace losses through appropriate mitigations, where a site-specific development adversely affects long-term production or management.

The project area would also include management emphasis for riparian (RPN) and all component ecosystems. RPN is identified in the Forest Plan but is not mapped. General direction for minerals activities in RPN areas is:

- * Avoid and mitigate detrimental disturbance to the riparian area by mineral activities. Initiate timely and effective rehabilitation of disturbed sites.
- * Where possible, locate mineral activities outside the riparian units.

The purpose and need of the proposed action is to maximize resource (coal) recovery while maintaining or improving water quality, sediment threshold limits, instream flow standards, vegetation, and fish and wildlife habitat. Also the purpose and need would serve to gain a better understanding of the surface effects of mining induced subsidence which can be used by the Forest Service and others in future planning and decision making.

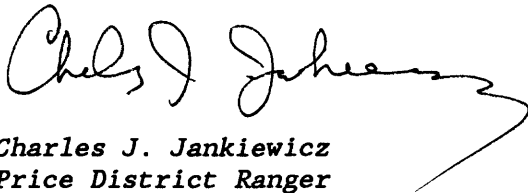
The analysis will consider a range of alternatives that respond to the proposed action, purpose and need, and issues identified in scoping. A No Action alternative will be among the alternatives considered. No action for this analysis is no mining activity which would subside Burnout Creek.

The Manti-La Sal Forest Supervisor will be the responsible official for the EA. When the analysis is complete, he will make a decision regarding this proposal considering the comments, responses, applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The reasons for the decision will be documented in a Decision Notice or Decision Memo. The proposed management activities would be administered by the Price Ranger District, Manti-La Sal National Forest.

The initial comment period is for 20 days. Please provide your responses by July 21, 1992. Your comments are welcome over the phone, in person, or in writing. Please address written comments to the Price District Ranger, 599 West Price River Drive, Price, Utah 84501. Our phone number is (801) 637-2817. Your input will be accepted at any time prior to the time the decision is made. However, the earlier in the process that we are made aware of your comments, the more useful they are in our analysis and decision-making.

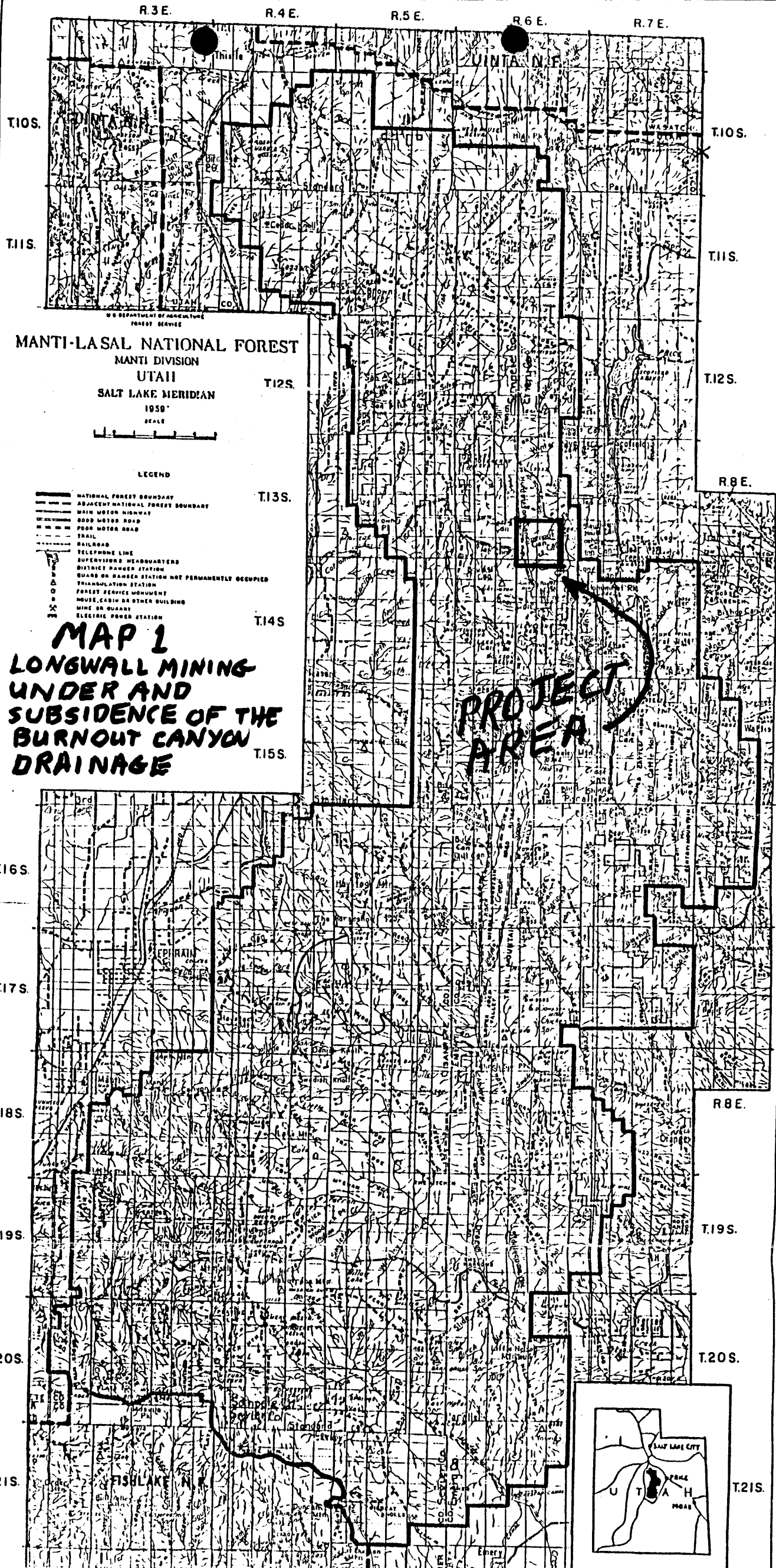
Walt Nowak has been identified as the Interdisciplinary Team Leader for this analysis. For additional information on this proposal feel free to contact him at the Price Ranger District.

Sincerely,



Charles J. Jankiewicz
Price District Ranger

Enclosures



BURNOUT
CREEK

MAP 2

UTAH FUEL CO.
MINE #1 LONGWALL
PANEL PROJECTIONS WITH
SURFACE TOPOGRAPHY

SCALE 1"=1000'

